

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE  
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office  
1244 Storrs Road**

**Tuesday, June 15, 2010**

**MINUTES**

Members: Steve Bacon, Laurie Best, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Ruth Moynihan, Karin Randolph, and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Pat Ferrigno, Meg Reich, Ken Rawn, and Carl Schaefer from the Four Corners Sewer and Water Advisory Committee and Lon Hultgren, Town Director of Public Works and staff to Four Corners Sewer and Water Advisory Committee

**1. Call to Order**

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm. Attendees introduced themselves.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Ruth Moynihan moved to approve the Minutes from April 20, 2010. Karin Randolph seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved with abstentions from Mr. Bacon and Laurie Best.

**4. Update and Presentation from the Mansfield Four Corners Sewer and Water Advisory Committee on *draft* Design Guidelines**

Mr. Bacon introduced the topic by saying that Pat Ferrigno and Ken Rawn had been part of a subcommittee of the Four Corners charged with reviewing possible design guidelines at the Four Corners area.

Mr. Bacon referred to the draft memo the subcommittee had drafted and was e-mailed to the Planning and Design Committee prior to the meeting.

Mr. Bacon said because the Planning and Design Committee had developed design guidelines as part of the Storrs Center Special Design District, the Four Corners

Committee thought it might be helpful to review its draft design guidelines with the Planning and Design Committee.

Lon Hultgren said the draft memo included input from Mansfield Planning Director Greg Padick and the design guidelines will need Planning and Zoning Commission approval. The guidelines are not designed to be as detailed as the Storrs Center guidelines but it was felt that some type of design guidelines are needed for Four Corners.

Mr. Rawn requested input from the Committee. Mr. Ferrigno noted that the abundance of property owners at Four Corners makes the process of managing design different than Storrs Center.

Chris Kueffner said he liked the idea of placing new buildings at Four Corners close to the street. Was mixed-use discussed? Mr. Ferrigno said the market would dictate what might be developed. Mr. Hultgren noted that the area is not zoned for residential at this time. As a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Mr. Rawn said the Commission is open to residential. Meg Reich encouraged mixed-use to be included as a potential use in the guidelines if that is a possibility.

The Committee and Four Corners Committee representatives discussed the fact that environmental concerns has prompted looking at establishing water and sewer at Four Corners. Mr. Ferrigno said there is some septic system contamination and that is why the CT Department of Environmental Protection has required the Town to develop a plan for the area to address wastewater concerns. Mr. Hultgren said sewer issues prompted the work on Four Corners but the area also has some water contamination issues. Furthermore, the area will have limited development without access to a water system.

Mr. Hultgren said a Town Meeting will be held on June 28 for approval on bonding the design of a sewage pump system and further work on options for water.

Mr. Ferrigno said the intention is for the guidelines to allow Four Corners development to be aesthetically pleasing and blend with other projects including Storrs Center. He believes developers will want to follow the guidelines to have pride in their development.

The Committee agreed with the draft proposal to limit curb cuts.

Mr. Bacon asked about the process with respect to following the guidelines. Mr. Hultgren said the Planning and Zoning Commission will be responsible for requesting that developers follow the guidelines. It will not be a Four Corners Committee responsibility.

Mr. Bacon said that Four Corners has similar land restrictions as Storrs Center in that buildings may have to go up in height. Mr. Ferrigno said that hotels that have approached him in the past have been willing to go up 4 to 5 stories. Ms. Reich said

that she did not believe that 4 stories was a detriment; her concern was providing enough parking on a restrained site(s).

Mr. Bacon asked if the Four Corners Committee had considered shared parking as a way to maximize space. Mr. Bacon said because it assumes different uses for parking at different times, smaller number of spaces are needed. Mr. Hultgren thought this would be a good option to consider.

Mr. Ferrigno said that parking lots would be contiguous to cut down on curb cuts.

Mr. Bacon thought taller buildings may encourage multiple uses in a single structure.

Mr. Bacon said he thought Four Corners may become more pedestrian-oriented than it is now. It is currently not very friendly to pedestrians given the intersection, speed and passing lane configuration. Ms. Reich said she wants to encourage bus stops at Four Corners.

Ms. Reich suggested adding to the draft design guidelines memo the need to coordinate with the University on gateway issues. She also suggested coordinating with the Downtown Partnership on these issues.

Ruth Moynihan asked about sidewalks at Four Corners. Mr. Hultgren said that sidewalks have been discussed in the area with the Town Transportation Advisory Committee but other areas of town were given higher priority because of the number of walkers or bikers. He did say their list of future projects does include a sidewalk from the Four Corners intersection to Timber Drive.

Mr. Bacon asked if the Four Corners has discussed possibilities at the intersection with the CT Department of Transportation (CDOT). Mr. Rawn that the Committee has not approached CDOT but it will contact the agency. Mr. Bacon asked if a roundabout had been considered for Four Corners? Mr. Ferrigno and Mr. Hultgren acknowledged that there is debate about whether a roundabout is pedestrian-friendly. Mr. Hultgren said regardless of whether a roundabout was ever built, pedestrian safety can be improved at Four Corners.

Pene Williams encouraged the Four Corners Committee and the Planning and Design Committee to look at gateways at other colleges and universities. Mr. Rawn and Mr. Ferrigno said gateway elements would include lighting and signage.

Mr. Hultgren suggested talking to UConn's planning department re: coordination on gateway issues before the Four Corners Committee approaches the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Ms. Moynihan encouraged the Four Corners to look at a smaller development if access to enough water becomes an issue.

Mr. Kueffner referred to the draft design guidelines memo and said he likes the idea of using the old road behind CVS.

The group discussed the issue of whether pitched roofs might be required. Ms. Reich said the University requires pitched roofs. Ms. Reich said she thought pitched roofs were about one-third more expensive than flat roofs. Mr. Ferrigno said equipment can be housed on flat roofs. Mr. Bacon said he likes the idea of pitched roofs on buildings at Four Corners. Mr. Hultgren said one option was to have screened flat roofs. Mr. Kueffner said pitched roofs add to making an area more aesthetically pleasing.

Carl Schaefer encouraged a meeting with the University soon to discuss their gateway and road plans out to Route 44. Cynthia van Zelm said she thought the road was still in environmental review. She said her understanding is that the University is still planning on some research and development capabilities along the extension of Hillside Road.

## **5. Update on Storrs Road design and Parking Garage/Intermodal Facility**

Ms. van Zelm said the design of Storrs Road was submitted to CDOT about a month ago at its 30 percent review stage. Town staff and its consultant BL Companies are waiting for CDOT comments.

Ms. van Zelm said two Requests for Qualifications were released for design of the garage and intermodal facility with 14 received for the garage and 7 for the intermodal facility. Five firms sent qualifications for both projects. She said Mr. Hultgren put together two committees to review the proposals and those reviews are underway.

## **6. Update on Storrs Center**

Ms. van Zelm said the April 28 Storrs Center public update summary is on the Partnership's website.

She said the latest businesses to sign Letters of Intent for the first phase in Storrs Center are Insomnia Cookies, and current Storrs business Select Physical Therapy.

Ms. van Zelm said the budget passed with the Town contribution to the Partnership. It has been petitioned to referendum which will be held on June 22 at Town Hall from 6 am to 8 pm.

Frank McNabb asked about the status of the Publications building. Ms. van Zelm said she is waiting for the investigations report from BL Companies.

## **7. Topics for Next Meeting (update from Mansfield Advocates for Children) and Set Meeting Date**

Steve Bacon said the next meeting will be August 17 at 5 pm. Ms. van Zelm said that representatives from the Mansfield Advocates for Children will be back to share a

comprehensive list of possible kid-friendly play structures and programming ideas for Storrs Center.

## **8. Adjourn**

The Committee adjourned at 6:45 pm.